



# Partner Perspectives

Credible science helps forest company manage for multiple resource values



## Partner Perspective

WEST FRASER MILLS LTD.

*"The Institute brings everyone together. We'd have great difficulty integrating our activities on the landscape without the framework it provides."*

**Jim LeLacheur,**  
Chief Forester—Alberta  
West Fraser Mills Ltd.

NOVEMBER, 2009 – West Fraser Mills Ltd manages more than 3.5 million ha of woodlands in Alberta, and carries out operations against standards developed by ISO 14001, and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. ISO 14001 is a management standard designed to reduce the environmental footprint of a business and minimize any form of pollution or waste.

### The Challenge

Jim LeLacheur, Hinton-based chief forester for West Fraser Mills' Alberta operations, says today's forest company has to manage the landscape for a dizzying array of values, from water and wildlife to timber supply to recreational and social demands.

"Interest in all these values has been there for a long time, but today there's so much more lobbying, opinion and activism that the government is under intense pressure," LeLacheur notes. "Ultimately, our ability to operate as a company on this landscape is at the public's pleasure, and there is no doubt that if they didn't want us here, we wouldn't be here."

### The Solution

Credible science must trump emotion when weighing divergent demands on the land's resources, LeLacheur believes.

"There are so many pressures, such a complex and competing list of demands on the landscape, that it's just essential that you manage on the basis of good science," he says.

"We have been a founding partner of the Foothills Research Institute and its predecessors since the beginning. The number of competing interests on the landscape and the complexity of decision-making demands that partnerships and applied science together provide the foundation for sustainably managing the Forest Management Area in an integrated manner."

This foundation supports an integration of demands and behaviors for desired outcomes, LeLacheur says, and the research institute models this integration perfectly.

"The Institute brings many committed partners together – industry, government, academia and citizens. We'd have great difficulty integrating our activities on the landscape without the framework it provides."

### The Results

Good science and working in partnership help the timber company maintain its social licence to operate on a very busy landscape, LeLacheur says. Sustainable forestland management tools developed by the institute support continued improvement of management systems.

"For example, we use Natural Disturbance Program tools that guide the sequencing of logging over a 100-plus-year timeframe to emulate natural landscape disturbance. This is essential to accommodate the long-term needs of wildlife species such as grizzly and caribou. There are really exciting opportunities in the growing knowledge of traditional values of aboriginal people and an inventory and referral system that helps us integrate traditional values on the landscape.

"Thank to the Institute and its good science, we can do all this while keeping the mill wheels turning. It's a key element of our long-term success."

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